

FISHER (G. J.)

A MEMORIAL SKETCH

—OF—

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

JOHN FOSTER JENKINS, A. M., M. D.,

OF YONKERS, N. Y.,

BY

GEORGE JACKSON FISHER, M. D.,

OF SING SING, N. Y.



[REPRINTED FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK,  
BY ORDER OF THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, N. Y.]

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By GEORGE JACKSON FISHER, M. D., of Sing Sing, N. Y.

Communicated to the Medical Society of the State of New York, by the Medical Society of the County of Westchester, N. Y.

For a period of no less than a quarter of a century it was my good fortune to enjoy an intimate and uninterrupted acquaintance with the subject of this brief sketch. I admired him from the commencement of our acquaintance to the hour of his death. Indeed, my admiration amounted to an ardent love for him, which never abated by time, but ever increased as we journeyed on in life together. We were within five months of being the same age. We were near neighbors, only thirty minutes apart, our respective towns almost in sight of each other, and as our tastes in many particulars followed nearly parallel lines, it is only natural that we came to love each other very devotedly. Time and again through all these years we interchanged visits, spending whole nights together in rooting among our bibliographic treasures, comparing our rarities, and in exhibiting our latest finds and gets. When it became obvious that death was hovering over my

dear friend, and that soon his cold finger would be laid upon him, my heart was heavy and my soul was filled with grief.

To write a memorial sketch of a friend may be a grateful and a pleasant duty ; to me it is, however, a sad and painful task. Alas ! dear friend, I requested thee to perform this kindly act for *my* friends, in the almost certain event of being the first to say farewell, and bid adieu to this troublesome, but intensely interesting and charmingly beautiful world.

John Foster Jenkins was born at Falmouth, in the State of Massachusetts, the fifteenth day of April, 1826, and died in the city of Yonkers, in the State of New York, the ninth day of October, 1882.

The Hon. John Jenkins, and Harriet, his wife, were the parents of a large old-fashioned New England family, consisting of no less than ten children, nine of whom were boys, and one a girl. John Foster, the subject of this memorial, was the first born son. But few particulars of his boy-life are known, or are of sufficient importance to be recorded here. At the age of twelve he was sent from home to attend the boarding school of the Rev. Mr. Leach, of Roxbury, Mass., at which school he made such proficiency in his studies that he was enabled to enter the junior class at Brown University, R. I., in the autumn of 1842. After remaining about two years at this University, he quitted it and entered Union College, New York, where he graduated in the arts in the year 1845.

It was probably during his collegiate course at Union, in Schenectady, that he determined to make medicine the profession of his life, for we find him immediately after his graduation engaged in a preliminary course of medical reading, as a pupil in the office of Dr. Alexander M. Vedder, a practical, learned, and eminent physician of that city.

Dr. Vedder was a graduate of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, and it was probably through his influence that young Jenkins was induced to attend the lectures of that institution, then, as now, one of the most celebrated seats of medical instruction in America. In the year 1848 he received his degree of Doctor of Medicine from this famous school, and yet, not content with his acquisitions in medical science, he devoted the following year in attendance at an extra course of didactic and clinical lectures at the Harvard Medical School in Boston.

Possessed of an active mind, a clear strong intellect, a quick and keen perception, ample opportunities, solid fundamental culture, and an ardent and earnest enthusiasm, one would say that he was now fully prepared to engage at once in the active practice of his profession. All these qualities and attainments were not enough, however, to satisfy the exalted ideal which Dr. Jenkins had conceived to be necessary to prepare the novice in medicine to assume the grave responsibilities and duties involved in the practice of an art where human life so often depends on skill and judgment, and death so often results from the want of them. Hence, the better to prepare himself for his life-work, he betook himself to Europe to expand the sphere of his professional education, to increase his store of knowledge by practical observation, to imbibe the spirit of eminent masters, and to ripen and strengthen his judgment.

From May, 1849, to May, 1856, he practiced in the city of New York, with the exception of the time occupied in making the tour above mentioned. This, his first tour to Europe, was rather brief. He embarked November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1850, at the port of New York, on the sailing vessel, *Duchesse D'Orleans*, for Havre, where he arrived December 14<sup>th</sup>: returning from London on the *Northumberland*, which sailed from thence July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1851.

While abroad, he spent the greater part of his time in Paris, attending the lectures, the cliniques, and the hospitals of that renowned centre of medical and surgical science and art. During his residence in Paris, he took occasion to make little pilgrimages to various places of note in France, going at one time as far south as Montpelier. The first of the great international expositions, or "World's Fairs," was then in progress in the city of London, which was a matter of so much interest that he devoted a portion of his precious time to a careful inspection of its multitudinous objects of utility and art, which were fully appreciated by him, as he ever had a quick eye for all objects of delicate refinement and artistic embellishment. In his after-life, while engaged in active practice, he never entered a house which contained an article of vertu that escaped his observation, his intelligent and refined criticism, or that failed to afford him pleasure; were it a painting, an engraving, a ceramic or a bronze, a carving or a rare book.

He spent but six months in England, though it was a part of

his plan to remain much longer, and also to visit both Ireland and Scotland before his return to America. This plan was suddenly changed by the circumstance of his having unexpectedly met in London the late Dr. Horace Green, of New York city, who discouraged his protracted stay in Europe and induced him to hasten home and enter at once into the practice of his profession. Whether any overtures were then made by Dr. Green for young Dr. Jenkins to become his assistant, I am not informed, but certain it is that soon after the return of these gentlemen to New York, we find Dr. Jenkins associated with Dr. Green, with whom he continued for a year or more. Dr. Horace Green at that time was a very distinguished specialist in the treatment of diseases of the air passages, by the "amputation of the tonsils," the "truncation of the uvula," and the "topical application of strong solutions of the nitrate of silver," by probangs, tracheal catheters, &c. Notwithstanding the pecuniary temptations which a specialty in that day offered to almost anyone who would choose his favorite organ of the human body—a day when a less number of pre-emption claims had been entered, or squatter sovereignty resorted to than now—Dr. Jenkins' frank and conservative nature led him to regard the human organism as a unit, to look to the general constitution in the treatment of disease, in short to avoid narrow and lop-sided views and to settle down as a general practitioner.

On the tenth day of October, in the year 1854, Dr. Jenkins married Miss Elizabeth Siccard David, who belonged to a highly respectable old Philadelphia family.

In the month of May, 1856, Dr. Jenkins located in what was then the flourishing village of Yonkers, as a general practitioner of medicine, surgery and obstetrics. Possessed of all the qualifications to which I have already alluded, together with a remarkably fine personal appearance, tall and dignified, with genial, courteous and charming manners, it is not surprising that he made an easy and speedy entrance into the favorable notice of the best people and society of that community. He was not long in becoming established on a solid footing, in gaining the confidence and in becoming the favorite physician of many of the most intelligent and influential families of Yonkers and its vicinity.

It was about this time that I had the pleasure of making his

acquaintance, soon to become warmly attached to him, to admire and to love him dearly. He was indeed:\*

\* \* \* \* "generous, honest, just and true;  
Noble in mind, and in his person lovely,  
Dear to my eyes, and tender to my heart."

The war of the rebellion had not been long in progress before that stupendous organization in furtherance of humanity—the United States Sanitary Commission—was set in successful operation. It was fully organized in June, 1861. At this time Dr. Jenkins was well established in a good and lucrative practice. Being a staunch Unionist, and possessed of the strongest benevolent sentiments and humane impulses, it is only natural that he immediately felt it to be his duty to retire from private practice and engage head, heart, and soul, in the work of the Sanitary Commission. Accordingly in August, 1861, we find him in its active service as hospital visitor, and holding the position of Associate Secretary of the Commission, in which capacity he continued to work, most efficiently, until May, 1863. On the retirement of Frederick Law Olmsted from the very honorable and responsible office of General Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission, Dr. J. Foster Jenkins was appointed his successor. He performed the arduous duties of this important office in the most prompt, thorough, and satisfactory manner to the month of May, 1865, when, on account of failure of his health, from over-strain and nervous exhaustion, he was obliged, though very reluctantly, to relinquish his post; a position in which he labored with enthusiastic delight, from a sense of the great importance of the work and the immense value of its results. As many persons of the present day may not be acquainted with the precise nature and extent of the duties of this office, I will quote them, as recorded in Stillé's "*History of the United States Sanitary Commission*," (8°, Phila., 1866,) p. 504 *et seq.*

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\* NOTE.—The artotype portrait of Dr. Jenkins, which the Medical Society of the County of Westchester has furnished for these extra copies of the Memoir, is an excellent likeness, but it is not satisfactory from an artistic point of view. Mr. Edward Bierstadt, of New York City, made every possible effort to procure the original negative, taken by Kurtz, which has been, most unfortunately, broken or lost; and it is much to be regretted that he also failed to obtain the loan of a very fine crayon portrait of Dr. Jenkins, in possession of his widow. Mr. Bierstadt has produced the best possible result obtainable from a negative which he took of an imperial photograph. This explanation is due to the friends who may see this Memoir, as well as to the Society.

"The General Secretary was charged with arranging plans for insuring the greatest efficiency of the Commission in all its departments, with making due preparation for campaigns and battle-fields, with the task of accumulating proper supplies at points near the army to meet its current wants, and a reserve stock in addition, to provide against emergencies; with devising the best means of getting these supplies forward when needed, and with determining the proper methods of relieving the wounded, and of transporting them to general hospitals. Besides this, he was invested with the power of selecting all the subordinate officers of the Commission, a task which, when the anomalous nature of their position in the army is considered, involved a very serious responsibility. The multifarious character of his duties will be better understood when it is stated that he was not only expected to enlighten the board as to the measures which should engage its attention, but was held responsible also for the due performance of its work in all its various departments, and for the character of the agents he employed. In the organization of the Commission's service, there were two Associate Secretaries, one for the East and the other for the West, each charged with the details of the work in his own department, and each reporting directly and constantly to the General Secretary. So, also, there was, during the first three years of the war, an office called the Chief of Inspection, whose special province it was to superintend the work of inspecting camps and hospitals. He also received his instructions from the General Secretary, and reported to him. The Statistical Bureau also was under his direct supervision. The headquarters of the Eastern and Western Departments respectively, in charge of the Associate Secretaries, were established at Washington and Louisville. The offices at these places were important centers of activity, for not only was the immense business of meeting the requisitions for supplies made by the Inspectors and Relief Agents employed in the different Armies in the field and in the hospitals transacted there, but connected with them were various Bureaus, each charged with a specific department of the Commission's work. Thus both at Washington and at Louisville, there were under the jurisdiction of the Associate Secretaries, a Supply Bureau charged with the movement of supplies, and a Special Relief Department, with its Hospital Directory, Pension Agency, and Homes and Lodges.

"The number of Agents on the Commission's roster varied at different periods from one hundred and fifty to seven hundred. The average number constantly employed was about three hundred."

The total amount of money and value of materials employed by the Commission has been approximately estimated at the enormous sum of fifteen millions of dollars. This estimate but poorly represents the value of the service rendered in mitigating the horrors of our civil war. The entire Board gave their time and services gratuitously, and many hundreds of laymen and surgeons spent their time and performed their labor in the cause without money and without price.

Stillé, at p. 503, says: "Mr. Olmsted remained in the service of the Commission until its general policy had been shaped by the events of the war, and its system of internal organization finally adopted. He resigned in September, 1863, and was succeeded by Dr. J. Foster Jenkins, a gentleman who, with great purity of personal character, and indefatigable zeal in the Commission's service, combined the important advantage of a thorough training for the special duties of his position, having held for nearly two years the very responsible office of Associate Secretary of the East. Ill health, resulting from too close an application to the duties of his office, forced him to abandon it in the spring of 1865, when Mr. John S. Blatchford, who had previously distinguished himself in the superintendence of the Relief work undertaken by the Associates in Boston, was elected his successor."

The President of the Commission, the Rev. Dr. Bellows, on the retirement of Mr. Olmsted and the promotion of Dr. Jenkins to the office of General Secretary, said: "He is promoted for his prudence, faithfulness, and high medical and general intelligence."

I had a personal opportunity on more than one occasion to observe the efficiency of Dr. Jenkins' executive ability in the work of the Commission. Well do I remember going to Washington in May, 1862, in response to an urgent telegram from him, to fit out the transport steamer *Elm City*, and to proceed with all possible dispatch as her so-called "Medical Director" down the Potomac and on to Yorktown, for the purpose of transporting sick and wounded soldiers from the recent battle-field of Williamsburgh, Va., to hospitals at the

North. In less than two hours I had made my hasty arrangements for leaving home and was on my way to the Capital. I immediately reported to Dr. Jenkins, who greeted me as if I had come to do him a personal favor, for he took the struggle for the preservation of the Union and all that pertained to it so much to heart that whatever aided the cause, and, particularly, whatever was done in the name of the Sanitary Commission for the relief of our suffering soldiers was as pleasing to him as if he was one of the latter. Having shown me the Commission's ample stores, of every conceivable thing that the most liberal humanity could furnish for any great emergency; and having directed me to select all that could be wanted for such an expedition—supplies for not less than four hundred men—it was delightful to witness the ease and facility with which he had everything promptly shipped and all carefully inventoried in his book of records. Those were stirring times. Energy and alacrity were required to transact the urgent and almost unlimited amount of work that was to be done with dispatch; the laborers of every grade must be earnest and energetic men and those who never tire of doing. No one was more seriously impressed with the truth of all this, and no one worked more cheerfully or more to the purpose than did our enthusiastic friend.

After his retirement from the service of the Commission, he re-established himself in the city of Yonkers and commenced anew the practice of his profession. He engaged in the work with renewed energy, and took the liveliest interest in all that was going on in the medical world. He attended with commendable regularity the meetings of the several medical societies of which he was a member, whether they were far or near, nearly always taking an active part in the discussions and often contributing to their interest by cases derived from his private practice and observations founded on his own personal experience.

The exalted estimation in which he was held by his professional brethren cannot, perhaps, be better understood than by an enumeration of the several positions of honor and trust which he was elected to occupy:

1. Physician of the St. John's Riverside Hospital, (Yonkers.)
2. Surgeon of the Board of Police of the City of Yonkers, (from the time of its organization to the time of his death.)

3. Senior Warden of St. Paul's Parish, Yonkers, (for twelve years.)

4. Hospital Visitor and Associate Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission for the East, (from August, 1861, to May, 1863.)

5. General Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission, (from September, 1863, to May, 1865.)

6. President of the Yonkers Medical Association, (one of its founders.)

7. President of the Medical Society of the County of Westchester.

8. Vice-President of the New York Obstetrical Society.

9. President of the Medical Society of the State of New York.

10. Permanent Member of the American Medical Association.

11. Member of the American Public Health Association.

12. Corresponding Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine.

13. Member of the German Medical Association, (New York City.)

14. Member of the American Social Science Association.

In 1869, Dr. Jenkins, accompanied by his wife and two young children, made his second voyage to Europe. To this delightful trip I have often known him to refer. He availed himself of important letters of introduction, tendered him by several distinguished American medical gentlemen, to many of the most eminent members of our profession in Europe. He was thus enabled to make the personal acquaintance of a large number of doctors of note, was frequently invited to dine with them, and had unusual opportunities to become familiar with their special ideas and methods in all the departments of medicine and surgery. On this occasion he visited hospitals, and other medical institutions, ransacked the book-stalls, and had a good time generally. He also took occasion to attend the meetings of the Obstetrical Society of London, and several other medical associations.

Dr. Jenkins was an active and highly esteemed member of the Medical Society of the State of New York, and had the distinguished honor of being elected President of that body, on the 21st day of June, 1877. It has been a matter of surprise,

and quite inexplicable to some persons, that he declined to perform the duties of the office. It was not on account of any indifference which he felt towards the Society, for he appreciated the honor as any rational man most certainly would. The following brief note was written by him to the Secretary:

YONKERS, January 11, 1878.

*Wm. Manlius Smith, M. D., Secretary of the Medical Society of the State of New York:*

DEAR SIR—Please communicate to the Society my grateful appreciation of their confidence, as shown in their last election of President. But I feel compelled to decline acceptance of the office.

With heartiest wishes for the prosperity of the Society,

I am very truly yours, J. FOSTER JENKINS.

In the year 1875, by a resolution of the Society, the time-honored season of holding the annual meeting was changed to the third Tuesday of June, and the meeting in 1876 was held at that time, and again in 1877, both of which are now believed to have been strictly legal. At the meeting in June, 1877, the Society changed the time to the third Tuesday in January. This action was taken in ignorance of the fact that a law of the State, (passed Feb. 1, 1876,) provided that no change should be made of the time of holding its annual meetings without notice of intention to change having been given, at a previous regular annual meeting. The result was found to be, that the action for change was technically irregular and illegal, and that, therefore, the meeting in January, 1878, would not be a legal annual meeting of the Society, in consequence of the Society having never been informed of this law, and hence not having complied with it.

Owing to this muddle, Dr. Jenkins, who was in fact legally elected President of the Society, entertaining a doubt as to the legality of his election, took legal counsel, and, having received the opinion that he was not the President, *de facto*, he acted upon this opinion and declined to attend the meeting and to perform the duties of that office. The Vice-President, Dr. Saunders, presided at the sessions of the January meeting in 1878. Dr. Jenkins and his legal adviser were both wrong; he was legally elected, though the meeting at which he should have presided was technically illegal. I have considered it necessary to introduce this somewhat lengthy explanation of Dr.

Jenkins' non-attendance at the meeting, and his non-performance of the duties of the President, in order that he should stand properly on record in this rather anomalous state of affairs. Honesty, conscientiousness, and sensitiveness, prevented him from taking the slightest risk of error. Incomplete knowledge of the law misguided the attorney and deprived the doctor of the honor of presiding at the Society's sessions, and deprived the Society of his dignified presence.

Dr. Jenkins was a wide-awake, stirring and industrious man. The demands of an extensive general and obstetrical practice, his frequent attendance at the meetings of the several medical associations above enumerated, his fondness for study, and his love of society, left him but little time for medical authorship. His contributions to the literature of our profession were not very extensive, though by no means unimportant. The following is a complete list of his papers, as far as I possess them or have any knowledge of what he has written:

I. Puerperal Mania, has it any Connection with Toxæmia? (Reprinted from the *American Medical Monthly* for November, 1875,) pp. 7, New York, 1857.

II. Report on Spontaneous Umbilical Hemorrhage of the Newly-born. (Reprinted from the Transactions of the American Medical Association, Vol. XI., p. 263-318,) pp. 58, Philadelphia, 1858.

III. Relations of the War to Medical Science. The annual address delivered before the Westchester County (N. Y.) Medical Society, June 15th, 1863. (Published by request of the Society,) pp. 16, New York, 1863.

IV. Tent Hospitals. Read before the American Social Science Association, May 21, 1874. Illustrated with figures, pp. 25, Cambridge, Mass., 1870.

The title of the first of these tractates, "*Puerperal Mania; Has it any Connection with Toxæmia?*" may sound very oddly to the younger members of the profession at this time. The fact is, this paper was written when far less was known of renal pathology than at present. Not many years before Dr. Jenkins wrote this, Gooch gave the following rather ambiguous explanation of the etiology of this affection, viz.:—"The cause of puerperal mania is *that peculiar state* of the sexual system which occurs after delivery." Only ten years before this article appeared, Dr. J. Y. Simpson (*Edinburgh Monthly Jour. of*

*Med. Sci.*, 1847, p. 288,) having recognized the fact of the presence of albumen in the urine of patients who were attacked with puerperal convulsions, failed to discover that the true cause of eclampsia was due to uræmic poisoning. The true light began, however, to dawn upon his thoughtful mind, as may be seen from the following observation in his article here alluded to:—"Perhaps in puerperal convulsions, &c., produced by albuminuria, the immediate pathological cause of the nervous lesions is some unascertained but poisoned state of the blood. Was there a morbid quantity of urea in the blood?" About the time Dr. Jenkins' article was written the attention of the profession was first called to the toxic influence of urea retained in the blood, chiefly through Braun, of Vienna, and Duncan, of Edinburgh.\* Dr. Jenkins puts this very direct and pertinent question:—"Do the facts in our possession justify the opinion that the form of acute mania, which occurs within the puerperal month, is sometimes attributable to a toxæmic condition of the blood? I do not mean pyæmic infection, as in cases of uterine phlebitis." \* \* \* "May not an impure condition of the blood, in puerperal women, be one cause of mania, as it is well known to be of convulsions in the same class? To a larger number of observations than we at present possess, must we look for a definite answer to this question. Should such observations, as this inquiry invites, determine the fact that a morbid state of the blood, whether depending on an excess of urea, on caseine, or on some unascertained poison, does sometimes induce mania in puerperal women, we may understand better than we can now the remark of Gooch, 'The cause of puerperal mania is *that peculiar state of the sexual system which occurs after delivery.*'"

The second paper of Dr. Jenkins, on *Spontaneous Umbilical Hemorrhage*, is quite an exhaustive monograph on the subject, embracing fifty-eight closely printed octavo pages. This valuable essay was communicated to the American Medical Association, and published in the eleventh volume of its *Transactions*, 1858, p. 263-318. One hundred and seventy-eight

\* Dr. Braun's belief, as declared in his treatise, is simply this:—That the convulsions caused by uræmic intoxication in acute Bright's disease, and puerperal eclampsia, are identical. This proposition was strongly defended by Frerichs, Litzmann, Wieger, Oppolzer, and others. It was powerfully assailed by Marohal, Siebert, Depaul, Levy, Scanzoni, and many others.

cases are here tabulated and carefully analyzed. The frequency of its occurrence, its pathology and treatment, and the literature of the subject are all well considered. Previous to this essay there had been some articles published. In 1850, Dr. John Manley read an essay on this subject before the Abernethian Society of London, in which the particulars of only twelve cases are given. In 1852, a century after the record of the first case of the kind was made by Dr. G. Watts, Dr. Francis Minot, of Boston, read a very valuable paper on hemorrhage from the umbilicus in new-born infants, (*Am. Jour. Med. Sci.*, Vol. XXIV, p. 310,) based on an analysis of forty-six cases. In 1853, Dr. George A. Otis published an article on the subject. (*Virginia Med. and Surg. Jour.*, Vol. II, p. 49.) His deductions were based on forty-nine cases, excluding those counted twice. The next statistical essay on this subject is by Dr. Stephen Smith, of New York, (*N. Y. Jour. of Med. and the Collateral Sciences, N. S.*, Vol. XV, p. 76, July, 1855.) with a table of seventy-nine cases, done in a far better manner than any previous attempts.

Dr. Jenkins' monograph embraces one hundred and seventy-eight cases, a considerable number of which had never before been published. It will long be sought as the best resumé of the subject in the English language. The article is reviewed quite extensively in the *American Journal of the Medical Sciences, N. S.*, Vol. XXVII, p. 433, 1859.

The third pamphlet of Dr. Jenkins is the annual address which he delivered as president before the Medical Society of the County of Westchester, June 16th, 1863, on the "Relations of the War to Medical Science." It was in the middle of the struggle for the preservation of the Union, and when Dr. Jenkins was in the service of the United States Sanitary Commission, that this address was written and delivered. Its purpose was to exhibit the valuable work which the Commission was engaged in doing, and to tell us the practical lessons which had been learned by the experiences of the medical and sanitary officers in the army and in the Commission, in everything which relates to the causes and prevention of disease, as well as the mitigation and treatment of the same. It is a noble address, and will repay any one for its reading at the present time.

The fourth and last of his published essays is on *Tent Hos-*

pitals. Dr. Jenkins was still in the active service of the Commission and surrounded with the din of war, and the groans of the dying, both from wounds and disease, when he wrote this practical paper. Every word of these twenty-six closely-printed pages savor of the earnest, practical and experienced medical observer that he was. It abounds in learning and wisdom. The following quotations will show the aim of the essay.

"The Department of Health of this Association, (Am. Social Science,) when inviting the preparation of a paper upon tent hospitals desired, I presume, to elicit a discussion as to the applicability of tents to the hospital requirements of civil society, rather than to ask further consideration of their uses for the temporary shelter and treatment of disabled men in time of war.

In a thousand growing towns and incipient cities of the United States, to say nothing of those larger cities whose petrified embodiment of old errors in hospital construction yield steadily their harvests of disease and death, there is to-day an urgent need of better provision than exists for the care of such members of the community as, disabled by sickness or accident, most fitly rely on the local hospital to raise them from the class of dependents and consumers into that of helpers and producers." \* \* \* \* \*

"I hope to show in this paper that tents are not less suited to satisfy the requirements of permanent civil hospitals than to meet the exigencies of war; that warmth and light and pure air can be secured to their occupants, and that so they satisfy the prime necessity of hospital construction, viz: that in them the largest number of sick may be restored to health in the shortest possible time."

Dr. Jenkins has brought a strong array of facts to prove that in many instances what are usually considered to be fine hospitals, both general and special, notwithstanding that they may have been equipped with all the "modern improvements" and sanitary appliances, nevertheless exhibit in their results very unsatisfactory mortuary statistics. "Hospitalism" or the lurking infection which clings to large establishments for the treatment of the sick, in spite of all reasonable care and cleanliness, is a matter of very grave consideration. Much valuable information and many useful suggestions can be derived by consulting this practical and able paper.

With all his facilities for instruction, his ample means of illustrating every subject pertaining to medicine, both by his extensive library, and his large practice, he never had a medical student in his office.

In the latter part of the year 1878, Dr. Jenkins found himself in very ill health and scarcely able to attend to his professional duties. This induced him to consult several eminent physicians in the city of New York. His symptoms indicated so serious a disorder of the renal organs, that he was advised to quit his practice at once and go to Southern Europe, and there to give himself up to the most perfect rest of body and mind. Accordingly, in October, he made his third voyage across the Atlantic, and proceeded without delay to Mentone, and other celebrated health-stations along the northern border of the lovely Mediterranean Sea. The beneficial effect of six months of residence in this genial climate, and the enjoyment of entire freedom from care and labor, was very manifest, and so highly encouraging that Dr. Jenkins resolved to return to his home and resume his practice again. He was an enthusiast and scarcely understood the term moderation, so he entered upon his work with renewed energy and zeal, being apparently unconscious of the insidious inroads which his malady was making upon his constitutional strength and power of endurance.

Seven and a half years previous to his death, Dr. Jenkins formed a copartnership with Samuel Swift, M. D., of Yonkers, with a view to lightening the burdens of his large general practice, and particularly to avoid the wear and tear of night practice. This association with Dr. Swift continued to the time of our friend's death.

For nearly three years after his last return from Europe, Dr. Jenkins kept very steadily at his work, and was at last confined to his house but nine weeks before the solemn hour arrived when he bade an everlasting farewell to the scenes of this life, and a final adieu to his beloved family and friends. This sad event occurred on Monday, October 9, 1882.

Dr. Jenkins was a gentleman in the fullest sense of the word; polite, refined, eminently pleasing in his manners, brilliant in conversation, pure and cultured in speech as in thought, ever mindful of the comfort and enjoyment of others, generous and hospitable, kind and sympathetic, cheerful and happy, reverent and devout, loyal and earnest in his attachment to the church

of his choice--the Protestant Episcopal--strong and unwavering in his confidence and faith in the Christian plan of salvation, he died, as he had lived, a beautiful example of an upright man and a Christian gentleman.

When Dr. Jenkins died all Yonkers mourned. For a quarter of a century he had been constantly growing in the estimation and affection of that great community and its adjacent villages. He was widely known and universally beloved. The medical profession of Westchester County felt very keenly the loss which it had sustained by his untimely death. The physicians of New York City, and of the State, and many others in various parts of the country, were saddened by the death of this lovely man. To a very large number of friends he still lives, for

“To live in hearts we leave behind,  
Is not to die.”

His funeral was largely attended by members of our profession. All that is mortal of John Foster Jenkins, M. D., now lies in the rural cemetery at Piermont, N. Y., on the western slope of the beautiful Hudson, a river whose scenery was to him a charm and a perpetual source of delight.

His wife and two grown up children, John Foster, and Mary Sicard, survive him. Dr. Jenkins delighted in his home, which was always cheerful, pleasant and happy, the result of mutual affection and refined taste.

Numerous resolutions of sorrow and sympathy were tendered to the family by the medical societies of which he was an honored member, and many brief and touching memorial sketches of his useful life appeared in the current newspapers and medical periodicals. The Yonkers Medical Association, as an expression of the exalted estimation in which it held him, promptly and unanimously changed its name to *The Jenkins Medical Association*, and at its first meeting under this new and very appropriate name Dr. Swift read a brief eulogy of their late associate.

The present memorial sketch is written in response to a request made by resolution of the Medical Society of the County of Westchester, which directs that it be communicated to the Medical Society of the State of New York, with a view to its publication in the Society's *Transactions*.

Dr. Jenkins, like most medical gentlemen, was not a very

good financier. He certainly had a lucrative practice and must have received in the aggregate a large sum of money. This to him, however, was a secondary consideration; his generous and liberal disposition was incompatible with the rigid economy which is required to accumulate money. He had the wisdom and foresight, however, to secure a life insurance in several companies, amounting to twenty-five thousand dollars, which was promptly paid soon after his death.

Aside from his household effects, his works of art, with which his home was handsomely garnished, his chief item of personal property was his large and valuable medical library. This was his special pet and pride. He was a sensible bibliophile, and not a bibliomaniac, as those who are very fond of accumulating books on any special subject are too apt to be called. If a man collects books that relate to his own profession, ancient as well as modern, and peruses them to the extent of his otherwise leisure time, and thus stores his mind with facts of value, traces the historical line of evolutionary descent, through all the stages which present methods in science have had to pass, from the original suggestion of an idea—the protoplasmic hint, as it were—has he wasted his time or his money in so doing, even though his executors fail to realize the full amount of the original cost of his library, after he has ceased to use it, whether it be on account of old age or untimely death? Dr. Jenkins was an earnest and devoted student of medical literature. His reading table was almost overladen with the current medical magazines, hospital reports, transactions of medical societies, prospects, and medical reviews, both American and foreign. His medical library afforded him one of his chief sources of delight. His pleasant rooms were walled about with cases and shelves, bending under the weight of treatises relating to every subject embraced in the broad domain of the medical sciences. While his library was amply stocked with the most recent works representing the latest advancement of our science and art, he was not unmindful of the value of the older and even the ancient classical literature of medicine. He had collected whole series of works on anatomy, surgery, botany, obstetrics, etc., to illustrate the progress of these departments through the past ages. His library was also rich in works on medical history, bibliography and biography. While his main purpose was to store his mind

with practical knowledge, he possessed the true spirit and enthusiasm of a refined and cultured scholar.

I feel that I am in a large measure responsible for having, unwittingly, beguiled my friend into a mild but harmless form of bibliomania for antiquarian medical books. At first, and for many years, he made himself merry at my expense in poking fun at my stock of "old medical bruisers," my "ancient and obsolete trash," and at last spent many an hour himself in wading through booksellers' catalogues of antique works, in search of new treasures, and, in time found himself sorely perplexed for space wherein to shelve his ponderous tomes of classic medical literature. It was, however, an innocent species of mania. It brought an ample compensation in the way of pleasant diversion for spare hours, and an interesting and elegant culture otherwise unattainable. Perhaps it would be better for the profession if this sort of diversion was more frequently resorted to. More than once I have said, though my books were burned as a funeral fire,—gentle reader do not conclude from this that I am an advocate for cremation of the body, or of incineration of books,—they have served a purpose to me, quite equal to their commercial value. I shall never forget with what zest we pursued our historical and biographical researches, with a view to ascertain the period and state of times in which our authors flourished, the prevailing medical opinions of their era, their contributions to theory and fact; in short, the nature and extent of their labors and even the particulars relating to their personalities. Thus we learned the story of our profession, and traced the gradual evolution of the science and art of healing.

It is a sad scene to witness the sale of a deceased friend's library. One almost feels that it is a sacrilege to enter into competition, to snatch up and carry off, like literary vultures, the treasures of one so recently among us. Five days were occupied by Bangs & Co., (Feb. 12-16, 1883,) in selling the eighteen hundred lots embraced in the catalogue, of over a hundred pages, of the medical library of the late J. Foster Jenkins, M. D. It brought scholars and librarians from all over the land, and yet the books, in the main, sold very low. It is not known what this library cost its owner, it is presumed to have been not less than ten thousand dollars, which is probably not far from the right figure. It brought in gross \$3,940.98.

Dr. Jenkins never intimated what disposition he wished to have made of this splendid library. Had his finances admitted of it, I have no doubt that he would have bequeathed it to the medical profession of Westchester County. When the immense and valuable medical library of the late Dr. Davidson, of Breslau, Germany, embracing 5,450 lots, was to be sold at auction in 1881, Dr. Jenkins appealed to several wealthy gentlemen for funds, with a view of purchasing it entire, and making it a library for Yonkers in particular, and Westchester County medical men in general. In my opinion, far the most gracious and appropriate memorial which could have been devised by his professional friends, would have been the purchase of his medical library, and the making of suitable provision for its use, increase and preservation, that his name, thus associated, could have been transmitted from generation to generation, and that his life and character might be kept in fresh remembrance, as a fine example of what it is not impossible for any physician to attain to, and an encouragement to any member of our profession to become erudite as well as skillful, to become cultured as well as learned, to be ever active in the pursuit of knowledge and in the performance of duty, to live, and not barely exist, to ever

"Remember, life is but a shadow,  
Its date the intermediate breath we draw ;  
Ten thousand accidents in ambush lie,  
To crush the frail and fickle tenement,  
Which, like the brittle hour-glass measuring time,  
Is often broke ere half its sands are run."





